

APPROVED: Meeting No. 41-95

ATTEST: *Paula S. Jewell*

MAYOR AND COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
Meeting No. 24-95

April 25, 1995

The Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland, convened in Worksession in the Council Chamber, Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, on April 25, 1995, at 7:37 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor James F. Coyle

Councilmember Robert E. Dorsey

Councilmember James T. Marrinan

Councilmember Rose G. Krasnow

Councilmember Nina A. Weisbroth

In attendance: Acting City Manager Rick Kuckkahn, City Clerk Paula Jewell, and City Attorney Paul Glasgow. Also in attendance were Assistant Chief of Economic Development Ed Duffy and Police Lieutenant Charles Holzberger.

Re: Worksession with Housing
Authority

The Mayor and Council met in Worksession with Housing Authority Chairperson Ardell Hilliard, Executive Director Gwen Tolbert and RHA Board members Harrison Fox (Vice-Chair), Ruth Jaure and Regina McAndrew to discuss the following issues:

1. Overview of the Housing Authority - Ms. Hilliard reported that since October 1994, Ms. Tolbert had quickly and effectively taken control over the Rockville Housing Authority. Ms. Hilliard noted that there was one vacancy on the Board and two interested applicants.

- (a) RHA Purpose/Programs/Services - Ms. Tolbert said that to date, the Authority administered 165 public housing units--from the lease stage to eviction, and they were in the process of acquiring eight scattered sites. In the Section 8 program, there were 180 units; 50 certificates; and 130 vouchers. Assistant Chief of Economic Development Ed Duffy noted that a common complaint by staff was that there weren't enough Section 8 certificates and vouchers available.
- (b) Resident Status/Ethnicity - Ms. Tolbert explained that there were over 500 families served by public housing and Section 8 programs; 80% of those served were African-Americans; 12% were Hispanic; and 1% were Asian.

Ms. Tolbert said that RHA instituted a policy of not accepting partial payments for rents. She said that this policy has helped decrease delinquencies, and RHA was also working with families to help them with budgeting practices to ensure that rents were paid on time. Mr. Fox added that the RHA was also working with local credit unions to establish accounts for residents to help them get ahead financially.

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- (c) Financial Status - The RHA has had some budget overruns and were working towards increasing the Housing Authority's reserves. They are trying to allocate costs into different budgets. An audit was completed in February and showed that some RHA policies need to be changed to conform with HUD policies.
 - (d) Goals/Improvements - The RHA is writing a plan for a home ownership program. The RHA runs a drug elimination program and counseling center for substance abuse; provides assistance to residents with finding employment; operates a narcotics anonymous program; and, in addition, a mentoring program is being established.
2. How Will The Changes At Hud Affect RHA
- (a) Reduction in programs/technical assistance - There is some discussion about turning everything over to Section 8 housing. Ms. Tolbert said she did not feel this would work in Rockville because there was not enough affordable housing in the City. Mr. Fox urged the Mayor and Council to think along the lines of encouraging development of rental housing.
 - (b) Assistance/Support from the City - Ms. Hilliard reported that the Housing Authority did not have the funds to pay for expenses associated with Ms. Tolbert relocation to Maryland to accept the Director position. The expenses total \$6,371, and, in addition, the RHA had to pay former director

Sandra Crew for her services as a consultants. The RHA also learned of back tax payments in excess of \$7,000 owed by RHA owed. However, she noted that the Authority has managed to pay off half of the delinquent taxes.

Ms. Tolbert reported that there were 100 persons on RHA's waiting list; many of whom had been on the list for many years. RHA closed its waiting list; however there was still an issue of 1300 names of people who were waiting to be added. Staff time, postage and envelopes were needed to inform these people about the waiting list. The Mayor and Council asked that Mr. Kuckkahn look into how the City could assist with this project.

3. Development Issues for the Future - Mr. Fox noted the Mayor and Council's goal of continuing to provide affordable housing in the City, which he said was in line with RHA's mission and goal. He said the RHA would like to work with the Mayor and Council in identifying what would be an adequate number of units that should be set aside for low-middle income housing. Mayor Coyle said that the City needed to look at housing needs by population (e.g., young families, seniors) and also explore a number of different options--building on zero-lot lines or increasing densities. Mayor Coyle also said that the business community should be involved and encouraged to build multi-family housing located near the companies, for their employees. Councilmember Dorsey said that the Mayor and Council would also need to determine what the changes in Federal levels for affordable housing would mean to Rockville. Mr. Fox proposed that

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RHA develop a plan to present to the Mayor and Council in the Fall.

Re: Adjournment

The Worksession with the Rockville Housing Authority was adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Re: Worksession with Rockville
Common Ownership
Communities Association
(RCOCA)

The Mayor and Council met in Worksession with RCOCA President Thomas Curtis and Board members Dorothea Thoms, Raymond Whalen, and Russell Stanford.

1. RCOCA Mediations/Arbitrations - Ray Whalen, Chair of RCOCA's Dispute Mediation program, reported that RCOCA resolved six disputes through mediation and had one case of non-binding arbitration which was not successful. Most cases were the result of a lack of effective communication between an association's board and its homeowners. Other disputes were not RCOCA-related types of issues, e.g., those related to landlord-tenant, traffic, or inspection services matters.

Mayor Coyle noted the Human Rights Commission's desire to move towards community mediation to resolve disputes, and he encouraged Mr. Whalen to get in touch with HRC.

Mr. Curtis said that when RCOCA was formed, there was talk of developing a standardized set of covenants to address townhouse and other development issues that the City would require that developers follow.

Russ Stanford noted that there were also problems in getting homeowners to serve on homeowner association boards of directors, and he said that he would strongly support communities following strong government legislation.

Mayor Coyle suggested that RCOCA consider sponsoring a homeowner association leadership training program. Mr. Curtis pointed out that the Communities Association Institute has an excellent training program.

2. The Future of RCOCA - Mr. Curtis said that he found that people don't always view non-binding aspects of arbitration seriously. RCOCA's challenge is how to get people to show up and participate at meetings. He said it would be important to find issues that will affect every homeowner association in order to keep people active.

Mayor Coyle suggested that an inventory be developed of issues within each homeowner association with information regarding what the City is responsible for and what the association is responsible for. Mr. Curtis said that he would like to see City legislation requiring homeowner associations to register with the City and give notice of who their board members were. Ms. Thoms said that homeowner associations would like to be able to use the City as a resource so they are not taken advantage of by contractors. Ms. Thoms also said that the City's Neighborhood Enhancement Program needed to be

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more strictly enforced. It was agreed that the following suggestions needed to be looked at closely:

- (a) A City requirement that homeowner associations be registered.
- (b) Establishment of minimum requirements for future development.
- (c) The creation of standardized guidelines when a homeowner association is developed in the City. (Mr. Curtis said that he will raise this idea with RAI to see if there are attorneys interested in developing some standards).
- (d) Requirements that developers build City streets according to City standards and rededicate them at later date.

Mr. Curtis recommended that the Mayor and Council talk to County Executive Duncan regarding a proposed change in legislation which would reallocate the State's transportation funding formula and cause homeowners a substantial sum of money each year.

Staff was asked to look into which developments have City streets; which have privately-owned sheets and how much flexibility homeowner association's have. This type of information can be included in the inventory discussed earlier.

Re: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, the Worksession was adjourned at 9:58 pm.